



Township of Stafford


Fertilizer Education Course

Presented by
Stafford Township
Department of Public Works



**“Are perfect lawns more
important than a clean
healthy bay or the
continued degradation
of our groundwater?”**

- Councilman John R. Spodofora



The EPA and NJDEP recognize that the largest factor that is detrimentally affecting our lakes, streams, bays, lagoons, estuaries, marshes, freshwater wetlands, fish nurseries, and groundwater is non-point source pollution.

Including runoff of chemicals and related substances from the improper application of fertilizer products.

Fertilizer Impacts

- Contaminates and Chemicals can be harmful to potable water supplies.
- Phosphorous can enter waterways and cause elevated growths of algae and aquatic vegetations.
- Improper application of fertilizers cause detrimental effects on waterways.
- Local soil conditions have little ability to remove nitrates, phosphates, nutrients, and other common ingredients in fertilizer

Based on those concerns,
The Stafford Township Mayor and Council
on December 15, 2009, enacted
Ordinance # 2009-50.

This ordinance created Chapter 105 of the
Stafford Township Code entitled
“Fertilizer Application Requirements”

Chapter 105-1, Purpose

- The purpose of this ordinance is to regulate the outdoor application of fertilizer products so as to reduce the overall amount of excess nutrients from fertilizers entering the waterways, thereby helping to protect and improve surface and groundwater quality.

Chapter 105-2, Definitions

- **Applicator** – any person who applies fertilizer products to soils and turf.
- **Buffer** – the land area, 25 feet in width, adjacent to any waterbody.
- **Commercial Farm** – a farm management unit producing agriculture or horticulture products worth \$2,500.00 or more annually.

Chapter 105-2, Definitions

- **Fertilizer** – a fertilizer material, mixed fertilizer, or any substance containing one or more recognized plant nutrients, which is used for its plant nutrient content, and that is designed for use or claimed to have value in promoting plant growth, and which is sold, offered for sale, or intended for sale.

Chapter 105-2, Definitions

- **Impervious surface** – a surface that has been compacted or covered with a layer of material so that it is highly resistant to infiltration by water.
- **Landscape Professional** – a person or business that, in exchange for pay, goods, services, or other consideration applies fertilizer products to soils or turf.

Chapter 105-2, Definitions

- **Phosphorous fertilizer** - Any fertilizer that contains phosphorus, expressed as P_2O_5 , with a guaranteed analysis of greater than zero, except that it shall not be considered to include animal or vegetable manures, agricultural liming materials or wood ashes that have not been amended to increase their nutrient content. The phosphorous percentage in a fertilizer is included on the packaging, which contains three numbers (e.g. 26-0-3), with the phosphorous percentage as the middle number. A zero in the middle means no phosphorous.

Chapter 105-2, Definitions

- **Soil Test** – a technical analysis of soil conducted by an accredited soil-testing laboratory following the protocol for such a test as established by the Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension.
- **Waterbody** – a surface water feature such as a lake, river, stream, creek, pond, lagoon, bay, canal, estuary, and any marine waters.

Chapter 105-3, Prohibited Conduct

- Applicators shall be prohibited from engaging in any of the following activities.
 - The application of fertilizer to an **impervious surface**. Fertilizer inadvertently applied to an impervious surface must be immediately swept or blown back into the target surface or returned to its original container or other appropriate container for reuse or disposal.
 - The application of fertilizer between **December 15 and February 15** or if the ground is **frozen**.

Chapter 105-3, Prohibited Conduct

- Applicators shall be prohibited from engaging in any of the following activities.
 - The application of fertilizer in **excess** of the manufacturer's recommended rate.
 - The use of fertilizer within any of **Stafford Township's Wellhead Protection Overlay Zones**.

Chapter 105-3, Prohibited Conduct

- Applicators shall be prohibited from engaging in any of the following activities.
- The application of any phosphorous fertilizer **except** as demonstrated by a need for a specific soils in accordance with a soil test and the associated annual fertilizer recommendation issued by the Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension.
- The deposit of grass clippings, leaves, or vegetative debris into water bodies, retention or detention areas, drainage ditches or stormwater drains, or onto impervious surfaces except during scheduled cleanup programs.

Chapter 105-4, Exemptions

- The following activities shall be exempt from the provision of section 105-3
 - The application of fertilizer on commercial farms although farmers are expected to implement best management plans in accordance with conservation management plans of resource conservation plans.

Chapter 105-4, Exemptions

- The following activities shall be exempt from the provision of section 105-3
 - The application of any phosphorous fertilizer when:
 - Establishing vegetation for the first time, such as after land disturbance.
 - Re-establishing or repairing turf after substantial damage

Chapter 105-4, Exemptions

- The following activities shall be exempt from the provision of section 105-3
 - The application of any phosphorous fertilizer when:
 - Applying phosphorous fertilizers that deliver liquid or granular fertilizer under the soils surface or directly to the roots
 - Applying phosphorous fertilizers to residential container plantings, flowerbeds, or vegetable gardens.

Chapter 105-4, Exemptions

- The following activities shall be exempt from the provision of section 105-3
 - .The applications of fertilizer products on a golf course, a park, or recreation area, when implemented in accordance with a Turf Management Plan that has been submitted to and approved by the Township, which shall be required on an annual basis, and which shall include the application of fertilizer on the property by a Landscape Professional.

Chapter 105-5, Recommendations

- **The following guidelines are recommended for use by any applicator.**
- **Fertilizers should not be applied within twenty-four (24) hours of any substantial rainfall consisting of any storm generating one-half inch of rain or more within a twenty-four (24) hour period.**

Chapter 105-5, Recommendations

- Grass clippings should be left on lawns to promote water conservation. In those instances where leaving clippings is impractical, excess grass clippings should be removed within eight (8) hours of mowing due to high phosphorous, nitrate, and nutrient content.
- All grass clippings and organic matter shall be removed from impervious surfaces.

Chapter 105-5, Recommendations

- **Drop spreaders, rather than broadcast spreaders or other type spreaders, are recommended for use when applying fertilizer.**
- **Only nitrogen-based fertilizers in slow-release formula should be used absent a documented need for other fertilizer types.**

Chapter 105-5, Recommendations

- Soil testing should be conducted once every three (3) years to determine which nutrients, if any, are necessary before any fertilizers are applied.
- Fertilizers should be applied, if at all, no more than four (4) times per year on a single parcel of property.
- Fertilizer should not be applied to areas within the 25-foot buffer of any waterbody.

Chapter 105-6, Fertilizer Education

- All Landscape Professionals who apply fertilizer to properties within Stafford Township must complete this course no later than January 1, 2011.
- There will be a charge of \$20.00 for each Landscape Professional for the course.

Chapter 105-6, Fertilizer Education

- A Landscape Professional with more than one employee may designate a person to serve as the business's "Certified Fertilizer Applicator". Any employee must work under the direct supervision of a "Certified Fertilizer Applicator", who shall be responsible for compliance with the provisions of this ordinance.

Chapter 105-6, Fertilizer Education

- Upon completion, each Landscape Professional that attends the Fertilizer Education Course shall be provided with a certificate of completion and a sticker to be placed on vehicles used by the Landscape Professional to document completion of this course.

Chapter 105-7, Enforcement

- The provisions within this ordinance will be enforced by the Stafford Township Code Enforcement Officer.

Chapter 105-8, Penalties

- Any person found to be in violation of any provision of this ordinance will be issued a written warning by the Code Enforcement Officer. After three (3) written warnings to an applicator, the Code Enforcement Officer shall issue a summons which shall subject the violator to a fine not to exceed one hundred dollars (\$100.00).

Chapter 105-8, Penalties

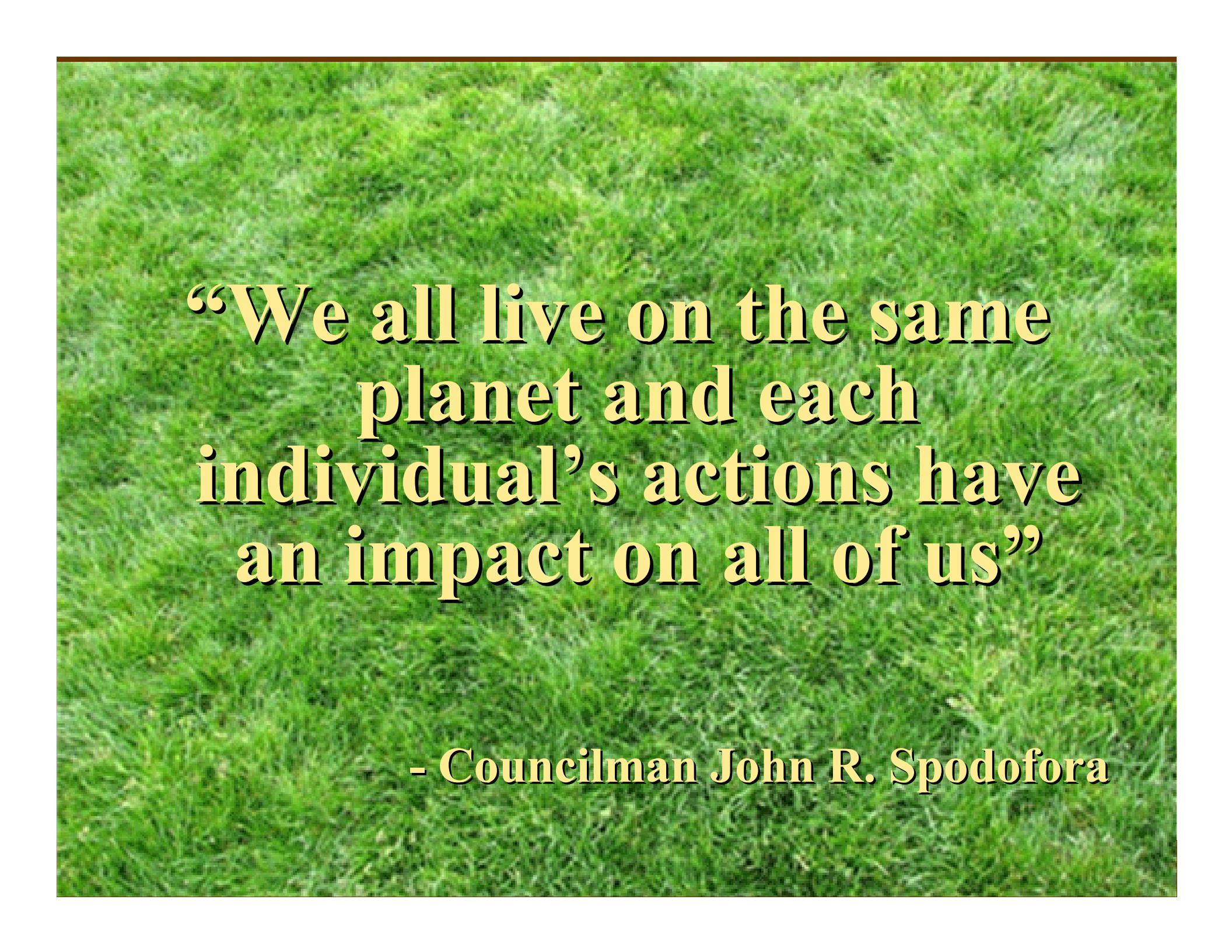
- Any Landscape Professional who fails to successfully complete the Fertilizer Education Class by January 1, 2011, shall not be permitted to apply fertilizer to properties within Stafford Township. Any violation of this provision shall subject the Landscape Professional to a fine not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00).

Reminders

- Always apply fertilizers in accordance with the fertilizer manufacturers recommendations.
- Never apply fertilizer at a rate higher than recommended.
- Under the definition of Phosphorous Fertilizer, if the phosphates are the result of animal, vegetable manures, agricultural liming materials or wood ashes **that have not been amended** to increase their nutrient content, they will be allowed.

Reminders

- Ocean Grow fertilizer is produced by Ocean County. Although the ordinance allows this type of fertilizer to be used since it is almost 100% organic animal matter, it will carry some phosphorous naturally. However, we need to be clear that if any chemical or non-natural materials are added to a fertilizer, even if it does contain some natural material, and these additives contain phosphorous, it would not be allowed.



**“We all live on the same
planet and each
individual’s actions have
an impact on all of us”**

- Councilman John R. Spodofora

A photograph of a park scene. In the foreground, a calm pond reflects the surrounding greenery. A wooden bench sits on a grassy bank in the middle ground, partially shaded by a large, leafy tree. The background is filled with dense, vibrant green foliage and trees. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

Questions?